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FM AMEMBASSY ASUNCION
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 3791
INFO RUCNMR/MERCOSUR COLLECTIVE
RUEHBO/AMEMBASSY BOGOTA 0494
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 0288
RUEHNR/AMEMBASSY NAIROBI 0123
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RUEHNA/DEA HQS WASHDC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC
RUMIAAA/USCINCSO MIAMI FL//SCJ3/SCJ33/SCJ34/SOCSCO LNO//
RUEHUB/USINT HAVANA 0146
RHEHNSC/WHITE HOUSE NSC WASHDC

S E C R E T ASUNCION 000182

SIPDIS

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STATE FOR DS/IP/WHA AND DS/DSS/ITA
STATE PASS TO USAID LAC/AA
POSTS FOR RSO
NSC FOR SUE CRONIN
SOUTHCOM FOR POLAD BARBARA MOORE
NAIROBI FOR MICHAEL FITZPATRICK

E.O. 12958: DNG: CO OADR
TAGS: [PTER](#) [PREL](#) [PINR](#) [PGOV](#) [ASEC](#) [SNAR](#) [MARR](#) [MASS](#) [KCRM](#)
PA, CO, VE, CU
SUBJECT: PARAGUAY: UPDATE ON LEFTIST PATRIA LIBRE ARRESTS
IN CONCEPCION

REF: A. ASUNCION 000157
[B.](#) ASUNCION 000149
[C.](#) 05 ASUNCION 000403

Classified By: PolOff Susan S. Sutter, for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. SUMMARY: (S//NF) Police officials transferred the six members of the leftist Patria Libre Party, who were arrested on February 5 in connection to the recent seizure of a truck containing weapons and explosives, to Emboscada High Security Prison. Separately, they discovered letters declaring the groups' intentions to take over power in Paraguay. Two of the members admitted to receiving guerrilla-type training in Cuba, Venezuela, and by FARC members in Colombia. Sensitive reporting indicates Colombia's Ambassador to Paraguay does not agree with GOP reports of the FARC ties to the PPL, and as a result he met with Attorney General Candia to seek evidence of their training of PPL members. Paraguay's sustained state presence in the remote area of Concepcion Department, where leftist PPL members are located, is limited and has hampered investigations, leaving military and police to rely on press reporting. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (U) Paraguayan press reported on February 15 that authorities transferred the six members of the leftist Patria Libre Party (PPL) to the Emboscada High Security Prison via an Air Force plane. Paraguayan officials had arrested the group on February 5 for transporting explosives and connections to a gang of kidnappers associated with the Cubas kidnapping (ref A). A related article in Ultima Hora reports that police and prosecutors discovered several letters declaring the PPL's objectives to "eliminate our political enemies and to take over power" of the government. The letters were written by Maria Villaba, sister of Carmen Villaba who is convicted in the kidnapping of Maria Edith Dibernadi.

¶3. (S//NF) Sensitive reporting indicates two females of the six PPL members arrested have admitted they are part of a group that was providing guerrilla-type training in

Paraguay's interior. In addition, the females claim Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) members provided them with training in Colombia, in addition to training they received in Cuba and Venezuela. Sensitive reporting from another source identified the two women as trained snipers. Press reporting that quotes a police source indicates additional PPL members, responsible for the murder of a policeman on February 6, (ref B) have escaped Paraguay and have sought refuge in the Mato Grosso do Sul state in Brazil. The press source suggests the group split into two platoons and may be moving at night to evade police and military officials.

¶4. (S//NF) On February 16, Colombia's Ambassador to Paraguay Bernal met with Attorney General Candia to discuss the situation in Concepcion and verify physical evidence of the PPL's ties to the FARC. Bernal has rebuffed the GOP's assertions of the FARC's connections to PPL in the past and evidence that placed FARC elements in Paraguay. Sensitive reporting indicates Bernal went to the Attorney General's office to view evidence, such as travel documents, of the training conducted in Cuba, Venezuela, and Colombia. Additional reporting from the same source suggests Colombia's Vice-President Santos is planning to visit Paraguay on March 2 to sign another bilateral agreement with Paraguay on security cooperation including anti-kidnapping tactics. The two countries signed a similar agreement in March 2005 (ref C). (COMMENT: Bernal and Candia have not established the kind of rapport that existed between Colombia and Candia's predecessor Oscar Latorre. Candia is resentful that the Colombians continue to look to Latorre in his capacity as the President's National Security Advisor as a key interlocutor. Meanwhile, Colombia's poloff has complained that Candia has not displayed much interest in deepening Colombian-Paraguayan

security relations to date. Ambassador Bernal has long sought to dismiss or downplay a FARC role, worried about damage to Colombia's reputation and "demonizing" innocent Colombians. We see evidence that the GOC and his own assistant here don't respect him. END COMMENT.)

¶5. (C//NF) COMMENT: The lack of any sustained state presence in this remote area of Concepcion Department has severely hampered investigations. In principle, the military supports the Paraguayan National Police (PNP), which has the primary responsibility for conducting the investigation under supervision of prosecutors. Contacts within military intelligence and military planning rely heavily on the press for its own informational and operational purposes. Separately, a contact with the anti-kidnapping unit of the Public Ministry described this search for PPL members in Concepcion as completely disorganized and admitted there was little cooperation between the police, military, and prosecutors. While many questions regarding the size of this group and the particulars of its strategy to subvert the government remain unanswered, this recent case reinforces past evidence of FARC involvement in providing assistance. END COMMENT.

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